



**Council 4 AFSCME**  
**Testimony before the Education Committee of the**  
**Connecticut General Assembly**  
**March 12, 2014**

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleishman and members of the Education Committee. My name is Matthew Brokman and I'm a representative of Council 4 AFSCME. Our union represents 32,000 workers across Connecticut.

**Council 4 supports HB 5523: AA Establishing a Task Force to Study Paraprofessional Staffing Levels.**

Council 4 represents thousands of paraprofessionals throughout the state in both urban and suburban school districts. Paraprofessionals play a critical role in educating our children – performing functions that range from individual instruction to developing curriculum. Too often, they are pulled from these responsibilities to handle other matters such as hall monitoring or substitute teaching. In addition, our paraprofessionals report that in recent years due to events outside the classroom they have seen students more in need of individual attention.

While increases in Education Cost Sharing funding under Governor Malloy and this legislature have helped Boards of Education avoid massive layoffs, the recession has led to many of these districts cutting back on hiring. The result is significant understaffing of paraprofessionals throughout our state. This legislation will help us guide a better strategy for ensuring that all of our students receive the instruction they need and deserve.